



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

63RD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2008

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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Illustrious Delegates,
Fellow Youth Delegates

Please allow me, Mr Chairman, to congratulate you on your election as chair of the Third Committee. In my capacity as Jamaican Youth Delegate, I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the Committee at this the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Today, I am reminiscing on the success of our athletes at the recent staging of the 29th Olympiad in Beijing, China. The Jamaican athletes captured the eyes and hearts of the international community and a special moment in history.

The lesson from our athletes' success speaks to the reality that when we commit ourselves to goals and work hard towards them, we can achieve excellence, irrespective of developing or developed country status. Let us apply the same principle for the next seven years and beyond as we seek to achieve and build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The mid-way point of achieving the MDGs has passed. Progress has been achieved in some areas. However, the anticipation of achieving all the MDG targets by 2015 remains elusive.

The Caribbean region is behind in its race to meet the MDG targets, and without recognizing the contribution of young people to achieving the MDGs, will definitely fail to reach those goals. A shift in paradigm is required where new ideas and new approaches need to be conceived that take us out of the cliché and into a new thinking, streamlined with the youth in mind.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to laud the United Nations for its achievement in preparing a youth policy at the international level, and specifically, the World Programme of Action for Youth. Young people represent one-fifth of the six billion people in the world today, ranging between the ages of 15-24. Of this number, 86 percent are living in developing countries, including the member countries of the Caribbean region.

It is my sincere hope that we can build on the capacity of the UN's youth programme within the Caribbean region allowing the youth of the Caribbean Community a greater stake in the formation of policies at the international level. Jamaica is currently the only Member State from CARICOM which includes Youth Delegates in its delegation to the General Assembly.

I challenge the UN Programme on Youth to redouble its efforts in partnership with CARICOM to review this situation with a view to effecting a positive change. This can effectively be done through the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme, which has already been established to, among other things, allow for greater participation of young people in the regional decision-making process.

I wish to align my statement with my fellow youth delegates from the Swiss and German delegations in calling on all Member States to support youth participation at the United Nations by including Youth Delegates in their delegations to the General Assembly and other UN related policy making bodies.

As young people, we foresee that we will be the leaders of tomorrow. We join the urgent call of our Caribbean leaders in encouraging the international community to devise strategic programmes to address the peculiar needs of middle-income countries with deep pockets of poverty.

To this end, I wish to reiterate the words of the Honourable Prime Minister of Jamaica in saying, "Jamaica and its CARICOM partners are proposing the international recognition of CARICOM states as a special category of Small Vulnerable and Highly Indebted Middle-Income countries." Mr. Chairman, it is the hope of young people in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region, that if this is done, we will be better poised in the global economy consequently, committing more of our resources to the social development of the region, aimed at reducing poverty where more than one third of the world's poor are to be found.

Mr Chairman,

The world is faced with peculiar problems which require eclectic solutions, it is imperative that we develop a cadre of young leaders to transition in key positions to meet the global challenges. To accomplish this, I am urging member states without youth councils to move swiftly in empowering the youth to make provisions for the establishment of such councils, including amendments to their youth policies where necessary.

Mr Chairman, Our generation is the "techno centric" generation given the global advancement in technology. Consequently, technology must be utilized as a tool to reach our generation, particularly with sensitising us to the messages of the MDGs. For this reason, I am appealing to all members states to devise creative technological means of creating a collective culture of achieving the MDG's – a culture that is inclusive of young people.

Mr. Chairman, transformations taking place in the family contribute to the poverty of new generations of working class urban youths, because the problems of unstable families are more frequent at lower income levels. To this end, I urge the international community to foster a greater awareness of family life education in the formation of social policies.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I call upon all member states to pursue vigorously, the goals and targets in the *World Programme of Action for Youth*.

I thank you for your attention.